PS 3515
.065 M4
1919
Copy 1

Memories and Musings

"E'en the sun seems to leave with regrets!
For it sprays all the hillsides with kisses
As it sits on the earth-rim, then sets."

MEMORIES
AND
MUSINGS

BY
BROWNLOW HOPPER

DETROIT
1919

PS3515
.O45M4
1919

Copyright 1919
BROWNLOW HOPPER

AUG 16 1919

©CLA530545

WHEN FRIEND MEETS FRIEND

We love the scene where friend meets friend—
The quickened step, the mutual gaze,
The proffered hand, the heart ablaze.
No vicious plot,
All ills forgot,
When friend meets friend.

Past scenes return when friend meets friend—
Perhaps a day has passed or more,
Perhaps a year, mayhap a score.
Years count for naught,
Past scene's the thought
When friend meets friend.

Time takes to wings when friend meets friend—
A chat or two, an hour or so,
A chore deferred, the sun sinks low,
The day is done
Ere it's begun
When friend meets friend.

The mask is raised when friend meets friend—
Those secrets held to self most dear
One must confide to trusted ear.
One joy, one fear,
One common tear
When friend meets friend.

TWO PENS

At the conference table over the sea
Two pens were reflecting in deep reverie.
One pen was from Krupp, quite boisterous and bold,
And one was of Bethlehem steel, we were told.

Said the pen from Krupp to the Bethlehem steel,
"Let's confide in each other and our histories reveal."
So these are the stories they tell to each other,
The pen of Krupp and his Bethlehem brother,
As they lay on the table end to end,
Where the League of Nation's men have penned.

Spoke the pen from Krupp in a restless voice:
"This office I hold is not of my choice,
For ere I was forged to this measly pen
I did service for kings in the ruling of men.
I confess with much pride that I was a sword,
And my voice rang commands in an unwritten word.

I made strong men shudder and waver and fall—
E'en kings paid homage to my beck and call.
I have blasted many a noble name;
I have taken honor and given shame;
I have pierced the mother's trusting heart;
I have shorn from infants their hands apart.
Strong cities did waver and crumble and fall;
Great armies did rally, then cringe at my pall.
I scoff at the adage, the much spoken word:
'The pen is mightier than the sword'.
Pray, Herr Bethlehem, what history have you?
Of what deed can you boast? Come, now, tell me true!"

The answer came thus, in less boisterous tone:
"This life you depict I never have known.
I come from a land that's over the sea,
Where friend deals as friend and hearts sing in glee.
As to deeds of great worth I confess mine are few
As compared with the laurels that now bedeck you.
For ere I was transposed to peace-writing pen
I a sickle did gleam in the service of men.
The harvest I gathered in many a field
And sang with the reaper in every good yield.
I slashed out the nettles and weeds that entwine,
I pruned in the orchard, I trimmed at the vine.
A life of real pleasure I truly confess,
Yet in this new service I dote not the less."

So these are the stories for ponderance of others,
The stories of Krupp and his less boisterous brother,
As they lay on the table end to end,
Where the League of Nation's men have penned.

THE BISON

In the Fort Hays Normal College Museum at Hays, Kansas, stands a huge mounted bison. Hays at one time was the center of the buffalo hunting grounds. William Cody (Buffalo Bill) was the first sheriff at Hays and won his title in this and the adjacent vicinity hunting the buffalo. Great lamentations went up from the Indians at the wanton waste of the buffalo by white men.

He stands the silent monarch,
All fettered, all abayed,
Compelled to view in silence
The place where once was laid
A carpet smooth, unhampered,
O'er valley, hill and plain,
Nor shall his hoof again touch sod
Nor eye see friend or kin.

Sad plight, O noble monarch!
Unfettered by thy chain
Leap forth and flee to safety,
Launch out across the main,
Return unto thy kinsmen,
Protect again thy kind,
Enjoy once more thy freedom,
Leave thoughts of past behind.

Alas! where is thy safety?
The Red Man long has passed,
Or else, like thou, he too is bayed,
The only friend thou hast.
Ah yes! he stands in silence
While white men pass around,
But his soul has long been living
In the Happy Hunting Ground.

BIG BEN—MY CLOCK

He sits there in evident comfort
With his hands up close to his face,
And no matter when I enter
He's sure to be there in his place.
But if perchance I have tarried
Somewhere for an hour or more,
He glares at me rudely in anger
As I enter my chamber door.

Whenever I get in a hurry
He fain would run me a race,
But at times of anticipation
He moves at a snail's set pace.
He is no respecter of persons,
His heart is as hard as a rock,
At least I've had that impression
Of Ben, Big Ben, my clock.

One day in fierce rage I grabbed him,
The noisesome, meddlesome thing,
And passed to the open window
To give him a spiteful fling.
But he seemed not the least bit frightened,
He e'en laughed at my rage with glee,
He knew that I dared not destroy him
For he keeps much data for me.

Ah yes! he knows I would miss him
If he should vacate some day;
His noisy little chatter
Doth set me in motion each day.
For one time I failed to wind him,
One slumbery night in June,
And when I awoke next morning,
My stars! it was almost noon!

I observed he was much offended
For he gave me a stare and a frown,
His face was quite pale and silent,
His hands were limp, hanging down.
But as soon as I wound and re-set him
He was happy, I plainly could see,
For he chuckled and clicked and chattered
And raised his hands upward in glee.

Since that day I've learned to respect him
As he sits there in elegant grace,
And often he smiles as I enter
As he peeps twixt his hands o'er his face.
So at last when my day shall have ended,
And to scenes not the same I recline,
I'll present him because of his service
To the reaper, old, grim, Father Time.

LIVES BUT THE BEST

Faint rays of light glow in the eastern skies,
The morn awakes! The universe from slumbers sweet
Turns in its bed and from sweet dreams yet incomplete
Rubs, as it wakes, its drowsy, dreary eyes.

Pearled dewdrops pendant from arched blades of grass
Are deftly shaken down by nature's wafting hand,
Each seeming lifeless form doth rise at her command
To life anew, as morning's busy fleeting hours pass.

Swift, tiny fog clouds vanish through the azured skies,
The smiling, rising sun is bathed in misty dew,
And with each bursting floweret takes its vow anew
As on through morning's blissful hours it flies.

The morn has passed, the midday's ruddy glare
Does now behold a world much filled with life,
The sun, no longer veiled, thrusts forth its crimsoned
knife
Into the bursting rose, and leaves the blood stains
there.

Fierce winds arise with each successive hour
And test the worth of each young shooting spray.
No weakling can withstand this wanton fray.
Survives but sturdiest, ablest, fittest flower.

Dark storm clouds gather ere the day is done.
And wind and rain, with no thought for the just,
Transmutes the fallen floweret dust to dust.
The day has passed, a battle, Nature's won.

And what is human life but Nature's favorite flower,
Which grows and buds and blooms and fades withal?
And in the storms of life the weak ones must needs fall;
The Reaper's burnished sickle's gleaming every hour.

THE FACE A RECORD TRUE

Do you ever get to musing
  When you're on the busy street
And attempt to read the stories
  On the faces that you meet?
For the face is but a mirror
  That reflects the things we do—
Just a page of recent history,
  Every line's a record true.

There's the face that first attracts us
As we pass along the way,
Free from cares and full of promise,
For the heart is young, we say.
Tho' the frame that still supports it
May be stooped with numerous years,
Yet the face hath kept its beauty
In its triumph over fears.

Then the face that's worn and haggard
Much too oft comes to our view!
There's no years by which to gauge it
In this life we travel through.
'Tis a face that casts a shadow
O'er the moving, throbbing throng.
Tho' it fills our hearts with pity
Yet in haste we pass along.

'Twixt the face that's worn and weary
And the face with joy divine
Peers the face of every human,
Somewhere peers your face and mine.
Men in passing view it, judge it,
Make deductions firm and bold;
E'en our secrets oft escape us
Through this window of the soul.

THE KAISER'S DREAM

The Kaiser one time had this dream while asleep—
"The world is my kingdom—its people my sheep;
It is now time for action, my plans are laid well."
Then there came to assist him the demons from Hell.

"My people, my people!" his voice went abroad,
To arms for your country, we're backed by the Lord.
My army for Kultur's the best in the land."
Then down from the four winds did war clouds descend.

Now Serbia was first to be slapped by his wing,
Then down on fair Belgium the vultures did swing.
"What care we for treaties," they boastfully said,
"They're mere scraps of paper, nor should they be
read."

The story of Belgium's too black for the pen;
The acts of the army of demons called men
Make decency shudder and turns the blood cold
As from an eye-witness these horrors are told.

The debt we owe England we never can pay
For giving her sons' blood in saving the day,
'Till Russia should wake up and out with the lance
Divert the attention of the Hun from fair France.

The story of France shall fill many a book,
And the world will remember the part that she took;
On her hills and her valleys and along her fair shore
Sleeps a legion of heroes at rest evermore.

Then off to the southland swept on the fierce Hun
With a purpose well fixed for a place in the sun;
But here he was met in the mountain's great height
With Italy's best manhood, all fixed for the fight.

Then as if by magic from over the sea,
From the homes of the brave in the land of the free,
There arose a great army as if over night,
Which proceeded at once to the thick of the fight.

Down through the long trenches, then over the top,
Across no man's land; ha! they never did stop
'Till the Huns in their fright beat a hasty retreat.
Then the Kaiser awoke to unquestioned defeat.

THE LAND OF THE SUN AND THE SODDY

Of all the scenes that confront me,
As I travel this fair land o'er,
There's none which doth quite impress me
Like those in the days of yore,
When the new homes were in the making
Way out on the western plain,
And often I find myself living
Those self-same scenes over again.

There's one which comes first to memory,
My home when that country was young,
'Twas built in the early Eighties,
On a hillside and next to the sun.
I can now see that quaint, rustic soddy
With its latch-string outside the door,
How vivid it is to my vision
That dugout! that mere "two by four!"

Now those who recall the old dugout,
Whose walls half of sod were made,
Will agree they were cozy in winter
And in summer were sought for their shade.
Tho' often they'd leak when the showers
Would happen to pass that way,
Yet we loved them much more than the mansions
That we built in a subsequent day.

Ah yes! ye olden time dugout,
I fain would give thee a toast,
Tho' now your old walls have crumbled
And mansions above you boast.
May the souls you have served keep your memory
Green down through the long future years,
Ye who rendered such excellent service
To the plainsmen, the brave pioneers.

And a word here for those in passing
Who erected these crude rustic walls—
Tho' they too have ceased their serving
May their names be written in halls
Of Fame, where the names of masters
Obtain, that the far and the near
Might observe, meditate, also further,
Those who wish, leave a memory tear.

Ah! now in my fond retrospection
I pass out through the low shanty door
And observe the surrounding scenery
As it was in the days of yore!
There's the same old cottonwood nodding
To the breeze, which in frolicsome fun
Doth caress, cuff about, then confound it
As it sticks to its place in the sun!

Then I look 'neath its wide-spreading branches
Where the dreamy-eyed cows gather 'round,
Some grazing, some standing together,
Some lying at ease on the ground.
And the calves that are huddled together
Lie asleep in the tall grass near by,
First a tail, then an ear gets in motion,
And reveals just the place where they lie.

I can see from yon limb hanging pendant
The quaint nest of the oriole bird,
Then from off the topmost branches
The sweet notes of the meadow lark's heard.
Then I search for his nest till I find it,
Burrowed down in the dead, curly grass,
For his mate in her fright doth disclose it
When she flits 'round my feet as I pass.

Then I couch down to peer in this hovel,
Which is naught but a hole in the grass,
And the eggs in the nest I would count them
For there's six, I'm quite sure, when alas!
The whole floor of this home is alive with
Naked babes, all their mouths opened wide!
Then in fear lest my call will disrupt it
I with care from this home step aside.

For the joy in this home is complete, sir,
In this "house that's not made with hands."
Just two hearts beat as one in its keeping,
For they both at their posts take their stand.
When the young have their fill and are sleeping
The female protects with her wings
While the male bird with pride is a-keeping
Constant watch from his perch as he sings.

Then out o'er the prairie I wander
Through the fields interspersed with wild flowers
When lo! all a-sudden I've entered
A large town, many homes, all of towers!
'Tis the home of the dogs of the prairie!
Here a sentinel the warning doth sound!
Then erect on the domes all are seated
Each alert for a dash 'neath the ground!

As I enter this quaint, distant city
Not a soul seems to wish me around,
Every face disappears from my vision
Save the owl's as he stands on a mound.
'Tis his home, once the home of these canine,
This crude mound that he claims as his own,
How acquired? It seems he just took it;
Furthermore, he is left quite alone.

As I pass through this unwelcome city
This bold bird, with his wide-open eyes,
Never ceases his bantering and scolding,
How distinct now I hear those weird cries.
Then I pause when I've passed through this city,
In this veritable "no-man's land,"
And observe the new life in its waking,
For the sentinel again hath his stand.

Then I turn from this scene to the others
I would see in these broad rolling plains;
There's the stream I would view as it windeth
Through the vales, twixt the hills, which remain
With their bluffs and the shrubs 'neath them clinging
Much the same down through fast-fleeting years;
Then I watch from the cliff by the river
For the close of the day which now nears.

Ah! the thrill which does come at this closing!
E'en the sun seems to leave with regrets!
For it sprays all the hillsides with kisses
As it sits on the earth-rim, then sets.
And a cloud with bared breast reaches outward,
Catching sunbeams in arms trimmed with gold,
For the daylight is now fast receding,
As the night its dark veil does unfold.

As I sit on the hillside inspecting
This great painting—(so many are worse)
Dame Nature doth dress for the opera,
For her children of night will rehearse.
Down the stream, in a tree, cries the screech owl
In tones of much quiverings and trills,
And 'tis answered at once by the coyote's
Sharp cries as he leaps from the hills.

Then the mocking bird springs from the tree tops—
He's the star in this opera so old;
His voice without range doth entrance us
As his rendition "The Follies" unfolds.
Not a song has been sung this whole season
That's not mimicked in accent and tone;
Every song bird now prays the finale
Will have passed ere this bird sings its own.

When at last this grand concert has ended,
There's a stillness which fills all the air,
And the scenes that were recently vivid
Blend in one constant black everywhere,
Save the heavens, where darkness discloses
Nervous stars which shoot flashes of light.
Each seems anxious for first recognition
As it boldly sets out for the night.

So these are the scenes that confront me
Ofttimes as I pass on my way,—
And the ties that were formed on the prairie
Still obtain tho' I'm now far away.
And I find, as I close this fond tribute,
That my pen fails to tell all I see
In the land of the sun and the soddy,
That fair land which so oft beckons me.

THE FROG

How happy the life of a frog must be
In his haunts 'mongst the lilies and ferns;
How delightful his school, the sparkling pool,
Where the most of his lessons he learns!
"To sink or to swim" is no adage for him,
He can do each nor suffer for same,
And to "Look ere you leap" he takes never a peep,
It seems nothing bespeaks him ill fame!

How happy the life of the frog must be,
For he sings whether sunshine or rain!
And when Winter's cold blast turns the pond into glass
He's content 'neath the ice to remain [flowers,
'Till the springtime and showers bring freshets and
Then he's out for his frolic again!
May I venture this hoax—he e'en sings when he croaks
And he croaks every time there is rain.

How mysterious the queer little frog is to me,
No likeness to turtle or fish!
He hops when he walks and croaks when he talks
And his legs look superb on a dish!
His suit's always clean, a velvety green,
Yet he plays in the mud like a pig!
There's a tail much to tell 'till he learns to swim well,
But his tail is all tolled 'ere he's big.

COME OUT TO THE SHORT GRASS COUNTRY

The short grass country is a large tract of land covering Western Kansas and extending into Oklahoma and Nebraska. It is a high and dry, rolling plain, as fertile as the Nile Valley. Without doubt it is the recreational center for the elements. Here seemingly all the elemental rehearsals are staged, but many of them are never presented to the outside world.

Come out to the short grass country
Ye of an inquisitive mind.
Come out and get first information
That will prove we're not one whit behind
The much older and more well-known portion
Of our Uncle's vast glorious domain.
Just come out and stay for a season,
And we're sure you'll decide to remain.

Come out to the short grass country,
Quit roving the rolling main,
Come view this great inland ocean
Of ripe-waving golden grain.
Take a view of our landscape scenery,
Take a whiff of our atmosphere,
Then a sip of our sparkling water,
And you'll find we've a haven here.

Come out to the short grass country,
Make your home with the people here,
Forget for a time the attractions
That hold memories of past so dear.
Take a part in our common interests,
Feel at home with the western man,
Give a lift on the wheels of progress
And you've placed on unfaith a ban.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 015 907 745 7